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ABSTRACT

Gender differences were found in the performance of 103 school administrators (74 men and 29 women) participating in the University of Tulsa's Management Development Program assessment center's evaluations. Exercises included an in-basket, two interviews, an oral presentation, and two leaderless group discussions. Women scored higher on the in-basket exercise and leaderless group discussion. They also scored significantly better in interpersonal competency and the oral presentation. The results were also corroborated by non-cognitive paper and pencil measures of performance. (Author/TE).

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GENDER DIFFERENCES IN ASSESSMENT CENTER PERFORMANCE

BY

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ABSTRACT

GENDER DIFFERENCES IN ASSESSMENT CENTER PERFORMANCE

GENDER DIFFERENCES WERE FOUND IN ASSESSMENT CENTER PERFORMANCE OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS (N=103). EXERCISES INCLUDED AN IN-BASKET, TWO INTERVIEWS, AN ORAL PRESENTATION AND TWO LEADERLESS GROUP DISCUSSIONS. WOMEN SCORED HIGHER ON THE IN-BASKET AND LEADERLESS GROUP DISCUSSION. WOMEN ALSO SCORED SIGNIFICANTLY BETTER IN THE DIMENSION OF INTERPERSONAL COMPETENCY AND THE ORAL PRESENTATION. THE RESULTS WERE CORROBORATED WITH NON-COGNITIVE PAPER AND PENCIL MEASURES OF PERFORMANCE AS WELL.

INTRODUCTION

THE MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM (MDP) AT THE UNIVERSITY OF TULSA IS A COMPREHENSIVE PROGRAM DESIGNED TO IDENTIFY AND DEVELOP THE MANAGERIAL SKILLS OF ADMINISTRATORS IN SIXTEEN SCHOOL DISTRICTS SURROUNDING TULSA, OKLAHOMA. THE ASSESSMENT PHASE OF THE MDP CONDUCTED IN JUNE, 1984, MEASURED THE ADMINISTRATIVE AND INTERPERSONAL SKILLS OF INCUMBENT PRINCIPALS, ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS AND CENTRAL OFFICE STAFF. GENDER DIFFERENCES IN ASSESSMENT CENTER PERFORMANCE WERE EXAMINED. SCORES FOR PERFORMANCE MEASURES AND A PAPER AND PENCIL BATTERY WERE EXAMINED FOR DIFFERENCES USING A POOLED VARIANCE t-TEST.

METHOD

ONE HUNDRED THREE (74 MALES AND 29 FEMALES) PUBLIC SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS REPRESENTING SIXTEEN SCHOOL DISTRICTS ADJACENT TO TULSA PARTICIPATED IN THE STUDY. THE BATTERY OF ASSESSMENT EXERCISES MEASURED THE PARTICIPANTS' ADMINISTRATIVE AND INTERPERSONAL ABILITIES ON SEVEN MANAGERIAL DIMENSIONS WHICH WERE IDENTIFIED THROUGH EXTENSIVE JOB ANALYSES. THESE DIMENSIONS ARE LEADERSHIP ABILITY, PROBLEM SOLVING, ORGANIZATIONAL ABILITY, DECISION MAKING, COMMUNICATION SKILLS, INTERPERSONAL COMPETENCY AND STRESS TOLERANCE.

STANDARD ASSESSMENT CENTER EXERCISES WERE ADMINISTERED. THESE INCLUDED AN IN-BASKET EXERCISE, TWO INTERVIEWS, AN ORAL PRESENTATION, AND TWO LEADERLESS GROUP DISCUSSIONS. EACH PARTICIPANT WAS EVALUATED BY A TEAM OF THREE TO SIX TRAINED OBSERVERS DURING THE ASSESSMENT EXERCISES. BEHAVIORIALLY ANCHORED RATING SCALES WERE USED FOR EACH SPECIFIC EXERCISE. A PAPER AND PENCIL BATTERY INCLUDED THE CALIFORNIA PSYCHOLOGICAL INVENTORY (GOUGH, 1954), THE HOGAN PERSONALITY INVENTORY (HOGAN, 1984) AND THE STRONG-CAMPELL INTEREST INVENTORY (STRONG & CAMPBELL, 1974). DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE MEANS FOR MALE AND FEMALE SCORES WERE EXAMINED USING A POOLED VARIANCE t-TEST (ONE TAILED).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES WERE FOUND IN THE PERFORMANCE SCORES FOR IN-BASKET EXERCISE, ORAL PRESENTATION AND ONE LEADERLESS GROUP DISCUSSION WITH WOMEN PERFORMING SIGNIFICANTLY BETTER (TABLE 1). OF THE PSYCHOLOGICAL MEASURES, SIGNIFICANT GENDER DIFFERENCES WERE FOUND IN THE THE MANAGERIAL AND ADJUSTMENT SCALES FROM THE HOGAN PERSONALITY INVENTORY (FIGURE 1) AND THE CALIFORNIA PSYCHOLOGICAL INVENTORY SCALES OF SOCIALIZATION AND ACHIEVEMENT VIA CONFORMANCE. THE STRONG-CAMPBELL INTEREST INVENTORY SHOWED MEN SCORED HIGHER ON THE REALISTIC SCALE AND WOMEN SCORED SIGNIFICANTLY HIGHER ON THE ARTISTIC AND CONVENTIONAL SCALES (TABLE 2). THE SCORE FOR TOTAL ASSESSMENT EXERCISE PERFORMANCE DID NOT YIELD SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES, HOWEVER THE SCORE FOR THE RATINGS COMPLETED BY THE PARTICIPANTS' SUPERINTENDENTS SHOWED A SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCE WITH WOMEN SCORING HIGHER (TABLE 1).

THE GENDER DIFFERENCES REVEALED BY THIS STUDY SUGGEST THAT THE WOMEN IN SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION ARE A SMALL BUT SELECT GROUP OF ADMINISTRATORS WITH MANAGERIAL SKILLS SUPERIOR TO MEN PRESENTLY IN SCHOOL MANAGEMENT POSITIONS. THIS MAY BE DUE TO THE HIGH LEVEL OF FEMALES WILLING TO PURSUE CAREERS IN A TRADITIONALLY MALE DOMINATED FIELD. FURTHER STUDY COMPARING FEMALE SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS WITH MANAGEMENT TALENT IN OTHER FIELDS IS SUGGESTED.

TABLE 1

GENDER DIFFERENCES IN ASSESSMENT EXERCISES

EXERCISE	MALE	FEMALE	t-VALUE
IN-BASKET	88.86	96.97	1.54* (df = 100)
ORAL PRESENTATION	56.16	61.72	2.93** (df = 97)
LEADERLESS GROUP (IC)	16.91	19.44	2.80** (df = 91)
LEADERLESS GROUP (TOTAL)	26.63	27.46	.61 (df = 86)
SUPERINTENDENTS' RANKING	2.53	3.05	1.66* (df = 76)

TABLE 2

GENDER DIFFERENCES ON PAPER AND PENCIL MEASURES

SCALE	MALE	FEMALE	t-VALUE
CPI SOCIALIZATION	38.25	40.62	2.59** (df = 66)
ACHIEVEMENT VIA CONFORMANCE	31.39	33.00	2.09**
SCII REALISTIC	55.26	41.88	4.55** (df = 66)
ARTISTIC	47.00	52.50	1.98*
CONVENTIONAL	52.60	57.94	1.92*

* $p < .05$
** $p < .01$

FIGURE 1

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HOGAN PERSONALITY INVENTORY

MALE-FEMALE MEANS